

NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ and Congressman MIKE HONDA. I thank all of them.

#### IRAN SANCTIONS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs will hold a long-overdue markup of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act. Some of our colleagues are focusing exclusively on Iran's nuclear ambition, as it was the nuclear program in itself that was the catalyst for the concern.

But if Iran were comprised of a responsible, democratic government, would we be as apprehensive about their nuclear activities? Of course not. But we are talking about an Iranian regime which just this year conducted two missile tests and continues to work on the range of its missiles and on enabling them to carry a nuclear payload. We are talking about a regime whose leaders throughout the years have made it abundantly clear that they will stop at nothing to destroy the Jewish State of Israel. We are talking about an Iran which for nearly three decades has been designated by our U.S. Department of State as the world's leading state sponsor of global terrorism. The clerical regime is fomenting bloodshed and promoting chaos in the West Bank and Gaza and Lebanon and the Persian Gulf, as well as in Iraq, where it is actively assisting in the murder of our U.S. soldiers.

On the battlefields of Afghanistan, Iran is also playing a deadly subversive role. As early as 2002, allegations emerged that Iran was supporting insurgent groups in Afghanistan, including its former archenemy, the Taliban. However, the first significant report of Iranian weapons in Afghanistan came in April of 2007. Then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, announced: "We have intercepted weapons in Afghanistan headed for the Taliban that were made in Iran."

Since 2007, several large shipments have been seized near the Iranian border. U.S. officials say that Iranian-made weapons have been found in Afghanistan and used by Taliban-led insurgents. These weapons have included Tehran's signature roadside bomb, the explosively formed penetrator, EFP, AK-47s, as well as C-4 plastic explosives and mortars.

On August 29 of this year, just a few days before General McChrystal submitted his request to this administration, Afghan and NATO forces uncovered a weapons collection in Herat with EFPs, Iranian-made rockets and dozens of blocks of Iranian C-4 plastic explosives.

In the August 2009 declassified, leaked version of his assessment, General Stanley McChrystal stated that: "Iran plays an ambiguous role in Afghanistan, providing developmental as-

sistance and political support to the Afghan government while the Iranian Qods force is reportedly training fighters for certain Taliban groups and providing other forms of military assistance to insurgents."

We cannot allow Iran to undermine U.S. efforts and kill our soldiers in Afghanistan. We cannot allow Iran to return Afghanistan to the status of a failed state and pave the way for attacks against the West using Afghanistan as its launching pad. We cannot allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons capabilities which threaten the United States and our allies.

If we are to be vigilant in protecting the lives of our men and women—military and civilian—in Afghanistan, we must increase the pressure on the Iranian regime and impose immediate sanctions on Iran. This should be our first option.

We don't have the luxury of time, to wait for an eventual Iranian response to U.S. diplomatic overtures. We cannot wait for the U.N. Security Council to come around. We cannot wait for our European and other allies to decide to do the right thing. The United States must lead by example. It is time to cut off the Iranian regimes' economic lifeline. As such, we should not stop at this week's Foreign Affairs Committee markup.

I urge the majority to bring the strongest possible form of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act to the floor next week for a vote, followed by quick Senate action so that it gets to the President's desk before the end of the year. We must do this now.

#### HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I came to Congress with a purpose, a purpose of working to preserve the way of life that we live in Kansas. I was born and raised in Kansas, and my home and family are still in Kansas. I never moved to Washington, D.C. because I love the sense of community and belonging that Kansas communities offer. Access to quality, affordable health care is one of those things that determine whether our communities survive and whether we have a future. This is why the current health care reform debate is so important to me, and I am extremely concerned about the direction that we are going.

During his campaign, President Obama stressed transparency and accountability in the health care debate. He said, I'm going to have all the negotiations around a big table and that the negotiations will be televised on C-SPAN so that people could see who is making the arguments on behalf of their constituents and who is making the arguments on behalf of drug companies or insurance companies.

But now the transparency that the President promised us is nowhere to be found, as several Democrat senators and White House staff hole themselves away to draft the health care reform bill behind closed doors. I understand the Democrats' desire to merge the two Senate committee bills, but this process concerns me because in this closed office, the future of health care for Kansans is being decided.

Does this small group understand the problems that cutting Medicare reimbursement rates will pose for Kansas hospitals, doctors, nurses and other health care providers? Kansas hospitals operate on razor-thin margins because they are already dramatically underpaid by Medicare. If these rates are further reduced, as the current reform bills propose, Kansas hospitals may be forced to close and access to health care for Kansans will be reduced.

Is this small group considering commonsense ideas that have been proposed by Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle that would make quality coverage more affordable and more accessible for more Americans? Some of those ideas that we have talked about include placing as much emphasis on wellness as we do on illness by giving employers and insurers flexibility to reward individuals who improve their health and manage their disease; encouraging medical students to become primary care physicians and nurses and incentivizing them to care for patients in underserved communities; permitting the sale of insurance across State lines, establishing high risk pools and reinsurance pools to address preexisting conditions and providing incentives to low-income families to retain or purchase private health insurance that best meets their needs; reforming our medical liability system to reduce frivolous lawsuits that lead to inflated insurance premiums and the practice of defensive medicine; encouraging health care savings by offering individuals health savings accounts that enable families to take ownership of their health; and upgrading our outdated health records system through the use of new technology to streamline costs and reduce medical errors.

It is my hope that these issues are being addressed as the President and Democrat leaders craft the health care reform bill. I have traveled across my State, and I have heard many Kansans who have worries. They are concerned about their health care and about the future of their State and country. Kansans and all Americans deserve to know what their Representatives are voting on, and they deserve the assurance their business will be conducted in a deliberate and open way.

The President has expressed a desire to explore a wide range of options for health care reform. Kansans want commonsense reforms that enhance our current system and reduce health care costs. What we do not want is the trillions in new deficit spending, reduced

choices for patients and doctors, and increased power in Washington D.C.

Health care reform must address the underlying reasons that health care costs keep increasing. We lower costs through reforms that eliminate the unnecessary overspending in our current system, not by shifting the costs of health care to taxpayers and mortgaging our children's future with exploding budget deficits.

#### HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, sometimes I get so angry when I hear some of the things that are coming out of the Congress, I can hardly believe it, especially when we are talking about misinformation.

I would never impugn the integrity of my colleagues, but I have to tell you, it really bothers me when people like the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the United States Senate give inaccurate information out and cite it as fact when in fact it isn't true. It's not true at all.

For instance, the Speaker of the House said, I'm very pleased that Democrat leaders will be talking, too, about the immoral profits being made by the insurance industry and how those profits have increased in the Bush years. She went on to say that she welcomed the attention being drawn to insurers and their obscene profits.

I am not here to defend everything that the insurance industry does. Obviously there are a lot of things that we need to do to help solve the problems of health care. But misleading the American people by giving false information isn't the answer. Last year, the health insurance industry made a profit of about 2 percent, way down the list as far as corporate America is concerned. Over the past several years, the profit margin made by the health insurance industry runs around 5 to 6 percent, way down to the bottom of where corporate America ranks as far as making profits are concerned.

Yet the Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House said that they're making obscene profits, and they're doing that to try to demonize the industry so they can ram through a public option that the American people really don't want. They don't want government coming between them and their doctor; and the way to start getting people to jump on the bandwagon is to give them misinformation.

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Obviously the cost of health care has gone up. Obviously health care premiums have gone up. And yet they say, well, the reason for that is because the health industry is making these huge profits, obscene profits. Two percent?

Two percent? It is not true. It is just not true that they are making obscene profits.

Now, we need to do something to solve the problem of health care. We need to lower the cost of health insurance. We need to come up with alternatives, such as medical savings accounts like my colleague just talked about here. We need to be able to buy insurance across State lines. There is a whole host of things we need to do. But misleading the public is not the answer.

That is not the only thing that really bothers me. The administration and the leadership in the House and Senate continues to try to do everything they can to dissuade people from believing the truth and believing what is really not true, to shut off debate, to shut off the First Amendment rights of people in this country.

For instance, right now, they tried to push through a gag order on Medicare Advantage companies. Humana was sending out to their policyholders information about what was going to happen if the public option passed. And what happened? There was a gag order requested by the Finance chairman of the Senate, requested by the Finance chairman of the Senate, so they couldn't get that information out. Well, the gag order was removed, but the fact of the matter is they tried to stop the people from getting the facts, and that is just wrong. It is wrong. It is not up to the quality that we should expect of our legislators. Nevertheless, they tried to do that.

Now the administration is trying to put the hammer on the Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is the backbone of the free enterprise system in this country, in part, at least. The business and industry people of this country look to the Chamber of Commerce to give guidance to the government wherever necessary so they can work together with the government to come up with ways to make sure that the free enterprise system continues to work.

Because the Chamber of Commerce does not agree with the public option, does not agree with cap-and-trade and some other things, the administration is saying, oh, my gosh, they are bad. They are the demons. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Can you believe that? I can't. How far is the administration willing to go? How far is the Speaker of the House willing to go? How far is the majority leader of the Senate willing to go in misleading the American people by giving false information out? I think it is just dead wrong.

Then they are talking about doing something about the Fairness Doctrine, to shut down conservative talk radio.

An attempted boycott of Fox News, Rush Limbaugh, and Glenn Beck;

Congressional action to take away the anti-trust exemption from insurance companies;

A Gag Order on Medicare Advantage companies;

Reports in Politico about how the White House is seeking to limit the voice of the United States Chamber of Commerce;

Efforts by the Federal Election Commission to resurrect the so-called fairness doctrine to shut down conservative talk radio; and

The President himself saying he was going to keep a list of bondholders who didn't agree to the government takeover of GM or Chrysler.

My time may have expired, but I will be back, because we need to tell the American people the truth, the truth.

Madam Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD.

[From The American Spectator, Feb. 18, 2009]

#### OBAMA'S ENEMIES LIST

(By Mark Hyman)

After the Democratic convention, Obama campaign lawyer Robert Bauer warned TV stations against airing a TV ad that was embarrassing to Barack Obama. The commercial focused on the longtime relationship between Obama and Weather Underground terrorist Bill Ayers. Bauer sent letters to the Justice Department imploring the agency to pursue criminal action against those behind the ads. It was not lost on anyone at that time that Bauer was considered a candidate to be the next U.S. Attorney-General.

A team of Obama campaign operatives, joined by major news outlets, descended on Wasilla, Alaska immediately after Governor Sarah Palin was introduced as Senator John McCain's running mate. This was immediately followed by patently false reports claiming Palin imposed book bans, joined a fringe political party, charged rape victims for emergency room treatment and cut funding for special needs children.

In late August, the Obama campaign emailed an "Obama Action Wire" to thousands of supporters and liberal activists exhorting them to harass the offices of Chicago's WGN radio by flooding the station with angry phone calls and emails. Activists screamed insults to call-in screeners. The radio station's offense was that a long-time, respected radio host had the temerity to interview Ethics and Public Policy Center watchdog Stanley Kurtz. Kurtz had uncovered university records that documented a much closer relationship between Obama and Ayers than the presidential candidate had previously disclosed.

A few weeks later, state prosecutors and top sheriffs in Missouri who were prominent Obama supporters responded to a chilling Obama campaign request. They styled themselves as a "truth squad" and threatened to prosecute anyone including media outlets that printed or broadcasted material they deemed to be inaccurate about the Illinois Senator.

Obama contributors in the Justice Department's Civil Rights section (headed by \$2,000 Obama donor and former ACLU attorney Mark Kappelhof) urged preemptive prosecution of individuals the Obama campaign believed might disrupt the November election. A cited example of anticipated disruption was to send mailings of a non-violent nature addressing voting issues unfavorable to Obama.

In October, a question from a middle-class voter resulted in an answer from Obama indicating the Democratic nominee was in favor of "spread[ing] the wealth around." This voter became the symbol of middle-class America and Obama's response the touchstone of his neo-Marxist policies. Immediately thereafter, Democratic Ohio state officials scoured government data bases and confidential records in an effort to find embarrassing information on "Joe the Plumber" (e.g., he is divorced) that quickly found its way into the press.